

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for presence-based management in a communication network, the system comprising:

an instant messaging (IM) and presence server coupled to one or more network devices in a communication network, the network devices coupling two or more endpoints to each other and enabling communication between a first one of the endpoints and one or more second ones of the endpoints, the IM and presence server being operable to:

using IM, discover one or more of the network devices;

using IM, obtain presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices; and

using the presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, maintain presence data associated with the discovered network devices.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein presence information on a discovered network device indicates a current presence status of the discovered network device.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein one or more portions of the communication network together comprise a trust domain.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein:

the IM and presence server and one or more of the network devices support one or more of Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and SIP for Instant Messaging and Presence-Leveraging Extensions (SIMPLE) Protocol; and

the IM and presence server uses SIP, SIMPLE Protocol, or both to discover one or more of the network devices and obtain presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices.

5. The system of Claim 1, wherein, using IM, a network device automatically communicates a publish message to the IM and presence server in response to the network device booting up, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

6. The system of Claim 1, wherein, using IM, a network device communicates a publish message to the IM and presence server in response to a discovery request from the IM and presence server, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

7. The system of Claim 1, wherein:
an authorized user at an endpoint is able to subscribe to status notifications on one or more discovered network devices from the IM and presence server, a status notification comprising presence information on one or more discovered network devices;

the IM and presence server communicating the status notifications to the user at the endpoint using IM.

8. The system of Claim 1, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able, using IM, to obtain presence information on a discovered network device from the discovered network device.

9. The system of Claim 1, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able, using IM, to instruct one or more discovered network devices to perform one or more particular tasks.

10. The system of Claim 1, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able, using IM, to manage one or more discovered network devices across one or more network boundaries between the endpoint and the one or more network devices.

11. The system of Claim 1, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able to manage one or more discovered network devices using an IM and presence client (IMPC) at the endpoint, the authorized user providing input to and receiving output from the IMPC via a network-management application operable to generate a graphical user interface (GUI) for managing the one or more discovered network devices.

12. A method for presence-based management in a communication network, the method comprising:

using IM, discovering one or more network devices in a communication network, the network devices coupling two or more endpoints to each other and enabling communication between a first one of the endpoints and one or more second ones of the endpoints;

using IM, obtaining presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices; and

using the presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, maintaining presence data associated with the discovered network devices.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein presence information on a discovered network device indicates a current presence status of the discovered network device.

14. The method of Claim 12, wherein one or more portions of the communication network together comprise a trust domain.

15. The method of Claim 12, wherein using IM comprises using one or more of Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and SIP for Instant Messaging and Presence-Leveraging Extensions (SIMPLE) Protocol.

16. The method of Claim 12, wherein discovering a network device comprises the network device using IM to automatically communicate a publish message to an IM and presence server in response to the network device booting up, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

17. The method of Claim 12, wherein discovering a network device comprises the network device using IM to communicate a publish message to an IM and presence server in response to a discovery request from the IM and presence server, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

18. The method of Claim 12, comprising:
an authorized user at an endpoint subscribing to status notifications on one or more discovered network devices from an IM and presence server, a status notification comprising presence information on one or more discovered network devices; and
communicating the status notifications to the user at the endpoint using IM.

19. The method of Claim 12, comprising an authorized user at an endpoint using IM to obtain presence information on a discovered network device from the discovered network device.

20. The method of Claim 12, comprising an authorized user at an endpoint using IM to instruct one or more discovered network devices to perform one or more particular tasks.

21. The method of Claim 12, comprising an authorized user at an endpoint using IM to manage one or more discovered network devices across one or more network boundaries between the endpoint and the one or more network devices.

22. The method of Claim 12, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able to manage one or more discovered network devices using an IM and presence client (IMPC) at the endpoint, the authorized user providing input to and receiving output from the IMPC via a network-management application operable to generate a graphical user interface (GUI) for managing the one or more discovered network devices.

23. Logic for presence-based management in a communication network, the logic encoded in media and when executed operable to:

using IM, discover one or more network devices in a communication network, the network devices coupling two or more endpoints to each other and enabling communication between a first one of the endpoints and one or more second ones of the endpoints;

using IM, obtain presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices; and

using the presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, maintain presence data associated with the discovered network devices.

24. The logic of Claim 23, wherein presence information on a discovered network device indicates a current presence status of the discovered network device.

25. The logic of Claim 23, wherein one or more portions of the communication network together comprise a trust domain.

26. The logic of Claim 23, wherein using IM comprises using one or more of Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and SIP for Instant Messaging and Presence-Leveraging Extensions (SIMPLE) Protocol.

27. The logic of Claim 23, wherein discovering a network device comprises the network device using IM to automatically communicate a publish message to an IM and presence server in response to the network device booting up, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

28. The logic of Claim 23, wherein discovering a network device comprises the network device using IM to communicate a publish message to an IM and presence server in response to a discovery request from the IM and presence server, the publish message discovering the network device to the IM and presence server.

29. The logic of Claim 23:

enabling an authorized user at an endpoint to subscribe to status notifications on one or more discovered network devices, a status notification comprising presence information on one or more discovered network devices; and

being operable to communicate the status notifications to the user at the endpoint using IM.

30. The logic of Claim 23, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able, using IM, to obtain presence information on a discovered network device from the discovered network device.

31. The logic of Claim 23, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is operable, using IM, to instruct one or more discovered network devices to perform one or more particular tasks.

32. The logic of Claim 23, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able, using IM, to manage one or more discovered network devices across one or more network boundaries between the endpoint and the one or more network devices.

33. The logic of Claim 23, wherein an authorized user at an endpoint is able to manage one or more discovered network devices using an IM and presence client (IMPC) at the endpoint, the authorized user providing input to and receiving output from the IMPC via a network-management application operable to generate a graphical user interface (GUI) for managing the one or more discovered network devices.

34. A system for presence-based management in a communication network, the system comprising:

means for, using IM, discovering one or more network devices in a communication network, the network devices coupling two or more endpoints to each other and enabling communication between a first one of the endpoints and one or more second ones of the endpoints;

means for, using IM, obtaining presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices; and

means for, using the presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, maintaining presence data associated with the discovered network devices.

35. A system for presence-based management in a communication network, the system comprising:

an instant messaging (IM) and presence server coupled to one or more network devices in a communication network, the network devices coupling two or more endpoints to each other and enabling communication between a first one of the endpoints and one or more second ones of the endpoints, the IM and presence server being operable to:

using IM and one or more of Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and SIP for Instant Messaging and Presence-Leveraging Extensions (SIMPLE) Protocol, discover one or more of the network devices;

using IM and one or more of SIP and SIMPLE Protocol, obtain presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, presence information on a discovered network device indicating a current presence status of the discovered network device; and

using the presence information on the discovered network devices from the discovered network devices, maintain presence data associated with the discovered network devices.

36. A system for presence-based management in a communication network, the system comprising:

a first device in a communication network; and

a second device in the communication network, the second device operable to convey to the first device a presence of the second device in the communication network that is independent of a presence of a human user.

37. A system for presence-based management in a communication network, the system comprising:

a first device in a communication network operable to communicate with a second device in the communication network using instant messaging (IM) independent of first user input at the first device and independent of second user input at the second device.